THE CLAIM OF THE BIBLE TO BE THE WORD OF GOD TESTED AND VINDICATED.

AN ADDRESS

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BY

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The Bible has in all ages been at once the focal point of the affection of believers and the central point of the attack of unbelievers. To believers it is the Golden Mile-stone, erected in the Forum of the ages, toward which all roads lead, and from which all paths radiate; but, to the enemies of God and Christ and of the precious Gospel of our Lord Jesus, the Bible is the central point of attack, because it is the very central part of the fortress of our faith—all else but pertains to the surrounding, circumvallating outworks which may be taken without the destruction of the Christian religion itself; but to undermine the Bible is to strike our faith at its centre, and therefore, as the conflicts of the ages grow hot and desperate, the attack becomes more and more determined upon the Word of God. It seems to me that, in these days especially, we behold the enemy—and, I regret to say, some who by their profession as disciples might be expected to be its friends—massing, directly or indirectly, their entire forces against the Word of God. Now, you will notice in the language of this resolution that there are two things to which your attention is mainly called. In the first place, there is a claim *indicated* here for the Bible; and in the second place this claim is to be *vindicated* for the Bible. The claim that is indicated is, in the first place, that it is the Word of God, *par excellence*, in a unique and original sense, the Word of God; and secondly, that it is the Revelation of the Gospel; and thirdly, that it is the book of a Person—the Lord Jesus Christ. Then, as to the vindication, I shall undertake, if the time allows, to show that, tried by three tests mainly, it vindicates the august claim. In the first place, the test of *Time*; in the second place, the test of *Truth*; and in the third place, the test of *Life*.

It is quite possible that, speaking as I do, extemporaneously, I may so dwell on the former proposition that I may not have time properly to discuss the other portion, but I shall hope to be guided by a Higher Wisdom in expatiating upon these heads of discourse that I have indicated.

Now, in the first place, let us look at the august claim which the Bible sets up for itself. It is pre-eminently and in a sense solely the Word of God. What is a word? A word is simply the incarnation of thought in human language. Every word, therefore, suggests to us two things, an idea or conception, and a vehicle or expression. The Bible is the Word of God in this double sense; there is the conception of God, back of it, and there is the expression of that conception in it. And these two things are inseparably connected. You cannot dissociate conception from

expression. We think in language. Our ideas are vague until they take in the mind linguistic forms. Verbal embodiments are associated with speech; before the word is on the tongue it is in thought, and language has marvellous power in connexion with thought. It gives it definiteness, distinctness—it gives it even colouring; therefore Wordsworth very profoundly said, as a philosopher as well as a poet, that "language is the incarnation of thought."

We know there is no little controversy waging in these days (there has been, in fact, all through the ages) as to how far inspiration may be affirmed of the Bible; whether the conceptions of the Bible are inspired and its language human, or whether the inspiration extends to the language even, the very forms of speech used, and to the very words used—and I wish flatly to put down my foot upon this platform, that I could accept no inspiration that does not reach to the words of the Bible.

Burke said: "Every word in a sentence is one of the feet upon which that sentence moves; to shorten one of those words, or change its place in the sentence, or alter one of those words, may be to change the entire direction which the sentence takes in its onward movement." You cannot change the language of Scripture without interfering with the substance of Scripture, so closely and so immediately and so inseparably is the language in which the conceptions of God are embodied or incarnated linked with and associated with the conceptions themselves—and I do not see how anyone who examines the Bible can have any doubt reasonably remaining as to the teaching of the Bible on this subject. Let me give you what I think you are all familiar with, two very prominent instances of these hints, in the Word of God, at what may be properly called, in a true sense, verbal inspiration, though that is a very much abused term, in the conception which people form of it when they hear it. By verbal inspiration I simply mean the inspiration of the language in which divine conceptions are expressed. It is not necessarily implied that in every case the substance or idea conveyed is approved of God. For example, when the Bible says that the serpent said unto the woman, "Ye shall not surely die," the record is inspired, but the sentiment is very far from being inspired. We do not mean by verbal inspiration any such nonsense as that every sentiment expressed accords with God's mind, as I suppose any person of sound sense would at once perceive; but simply that when God puts in the Bible any one of His conceptions for the human mind to apprehend, the language is guarded so that the conception shall be adequately and accurately expressed according to the divine mind.

Now, it is a curious fact that, in the tenth chapter of John, thirty-fourth verse, the argument for the inspiration of Holy Scripture depends, as you will remember, not only upon the thought but upon the very *word* of Scripture. The quotation is from the eighty-second Psalm, "I said, ye are gods," and our Saviour, referring to this, and quoting it, says: "If he called them gods unto whom the Word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken) say ye of Him whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world 'Thou blasphemest,' because I said, I am the Son of God?" Now, the pertinent point in this quotation is this, that the entire argument *of* our blessed Saviour turns upon the inviolability of the *word* employed—the Scripture cannot be broken even so far as to exchange in it or subtract from it a word. Take the other singularly unique instance of testimony of the same kind. Paul says to the Galatians, quoting from

the Book of Genesis the promise to Abraham and others like him, where Christ is referred to as the Messianic Seed—" He saith not *of seeds*, as of many, but as of one, 'of thy *seed*,' which is Christ;" and there the argument turns not simply upon the word which cannot be changed, but upon the *number* of the word, that cannot be altered from singular to plural. It seems to me that with these two instances before us we need no other testimony. We can see that God designs to impress the peculiar signature and seal of his approbation upon the very words in which divine ideas are clothed and divine conceptions expressed. The Bible sets up the august claim to being the Word of God, inspired, and infallibly inspired. Now, there is danger in certain concessions of inspiration. It is one of the resorts of modern scepticism and infidelity (lying often within the bounds of the nominal Church of God) to concede that the Bible is inspired, but to insist that every other book is inspired also. Milton's "Paradise Lost" is inspired. Well, all I can say is, if it is inspired, there is a great deal of error in it that must be inspired too! It is said that Newton's "Philosophy" is inspired, that Bacon's "Novum Organum" is inspired, that Edison was inspired to produce modern inventions pertaining to electricity. Well, this is the inspiration of genius. There is a sense in which we believe that all poetry, and all philosophy, and all oratory, and all discovery and invention are inspired, but it is the inspiration of genius, and the concession fails just here, this inspiration is not infallible. There may be much truth and there may be much error, and they are hopelessly mixed, if man is to be the judge of what is truth and what is error. We must have in the Word of God not only an inspired book, in this broad sense of inspiration, but an inspired book in the narrower sense of inspiration—an inspiration which constitutes this Book an infallible guide in faith and in duty.

We all feel the necessity for some court to which final appeal may be made, and to which we may carry up from lower tribunals all doubtful cases for absolute and final adjudication. The time used to be when men depended upon sun dials for their knowledge of the time of day; watches were invented, then chronometers by which watches might be regulated; but when you want to regulate your chronometers you must take God's clock of the ages, and you must erect your transit instrument, and watch when the sun crosses the meridian, for during six thousand years the sun has never failed to come to his meridian point by the thousandth part of a second of time, day after day. And just so, wherever even conscience utters an uncertain sound, or gives a doubtful verdict; wherever the common sense of mankind, or the *communis consensus Christianorum*, the consensus of Christian disciples—which may be by no means infallible—varies we correct our human watches by God's unchangeable clock dial, for somehow, my dear friends, nothing beneath the stars runs exactly right. The Bible is God's final Court of Appeal. We come to it to correct the variation of our human compasses and determine precisely the line of direction in all things that pertain both to doctrine and practice.

And then the Word of God sets up an august claim to being the one and only revelation of the Gospel. That is because, for our salvation, we absolutely need a revelation. We should have known nothing about salvation but for the Bible. These are old thoughts—I pretend to bring nothing new to you to-night, though I hope to be able to set some old thoughts before you in some new lights; and I beg you to notice that we should infer from nature no such thing as a possible salvation. There is

nothing so inexorably unforgiving as nature. If, by accident, I fall from a precipice, or by design jump from a precipice, in either case I am dashed to pieces. If I handle edge tools, I am just as sure by carelessness to be cut, as by design. There is the wound, and even if that wound is healed by time, and cured, there is the scar. If you should search in the natural world alone you might look over the universe and never find one suggestion or hint of forgiveness. Nature never saves; she has no salvation. Obedience to her laws is the only hope of prosperity or wellbeing, no repentance will undo the wrong or cancel the damage, and you must look to God alone for a scheme of salvation, and only through the Word of God. It is a matter of pure *revelation*; it is not in the universe otherwise; you cannot otherwise discover it for yourself, you cannot infer it by any process of argument; it must be simply a revelation, something brought out of darkness, and from behind the veil of obscurity, and revealed. Now, if you want to apprehend and appreciate the value of the Bible as the positive revelation of salvation, and the only revelation of salvation, I pray you to take perhaps the foremost of all the systems of heathenism, and just for a moment compare it with the Bible. Take, for instance, Buddhism. Now, there are three great postulates of Buddhism—incarnation first; second, transmigration; third, annihilation. Buddha found this world in a hopeless condition of entanglement, men down in the horrible pit, and the miry clay of their own sensuality and selfishness and depravity, rotting in their own vices, warring against each other and warring against themselves, and there was no deliverer. When they died they only passed from one form of existence to another; it was a transmigration from one animal form to another, perhaps a higher, perhaps a lower, and there was no escape from these thirty-three thousand transmigrations, sphere upon sphere, condition of existence upon condition of existence, world upon world, in the great system of planetary spheres, in which men might carry on after death another existence in another form, returning from time to time in the spiral round of their existence to this same planetary system. And now the question was, How shall man be redeemed from this horrible condition, and saved from this terrible destiny? Buddha professed to have found some method of deliverance—the extinction of all desire, physical, mental, moral, spiritual—a life of contemplation, meditation, suppression of all passion, of all lusts, of all aspirations, of all ambitions—that was the hope of Nirvana, which is virtually annihilation—if it is not annihilation of being it is annihilation of personality, as a drop loses its individuality when it drops into the sea. Now, compare this scheme of salvation, of escape from endless transmigrations in personal annihilation or the annihilation of personality—just compare that scheme of salvation with God's scheme of salvation in Christ: Justification through the atoning Blood, Regeneration by a transforming and enlightening spirit, Sanctification by the power of the Word of God and Blood of Christ and the influence of the Holy Ghost conjointly, and so deliverance at last—from the penalty of sin first, and the power of sin second, and the presence of sin third; the preparation of man for the eternal life of blessedness and fellowship with God, by the re-creation of man in the image of God and the elimination of all sinful propensities and passions, and the final union of a redeemed soul with a redeemed body. None of the religions of earth have ever invented such a scheme of salvation, or even suggested the possibility of such a scheme, and one of the most remarkable things about it is that it saves God as well as man; it saves God

either from indifference to sin, and so complicity with it, on the one hand, or from condoning offences, and so impeaching His own attributes, on the other. Mercy and Truth meet together, Righteousness and Peace kiss each other; there is harmony in the attributes of God, and there can be reconciliation between God and man, without either man's losing his respect for God, or God's losing the perfection and symmetry of His own character.

Then, again, I beg you to notice that this Bible which sets up this august claim to being the Word of God, and the only Revelation of the Gospel of Salvation, is the Book of a Person. "In the volume of the Book it is written of Me." There is only one Book and there is only one Person—the Book of God and the Person Jesus Christ—and this Bible is pre-eminently the Book of a Person. If you turn to the New Testament you have the historic portion of it centralizing about Jesus Christ, a fourfold Gospel. Not four Gospels, but one Gospel. We frequently say, and very incorrectly, the Gospel of Matthew, or Matthew's Gospel, Mark's Gospel, Luke's Gospel, John's Gospel. The Bible never speaks in that way. It is, "The Gospel according to Matthew," "The Gospel according to Mark," "The Gospel according to Luke," "The Gospel according to John"; one Gospel in a fourfold aspect, like the mystic creature in Ezekiel's vision, a creature having four heads, these heads facing in different directions, but one creature. Here is the fourfold Gospel, the fourfold face of the cherubic creature of Ezekiel's vision. In Matthew it is the face of the lion of the Tribe of Judah; in Mark it is the face of the sacrificial ox or calf; in Luke it is the face of a man; in John it is the face of the eagle, soaring far above the level of humanity into the clear empyrean regions of the upper air, and looking directly in the sun's own face. It is a fourfold Gospel, or if you please to change the figure for a moment, I remember in one of the scientific galleries of the old world to have seen a fourfold combination of mirrors, so accurately and skilfully adjusted that when you stood upon the stool that was set in the midst of them, you saw the image of yourself not simply reflected in the mirrors, but projected from the mirrors and between them. So it is here, a fourfold mirror of Jesus Christ. You see not simply a reflection of Christ in Matthew and in Mark, and in Luke and in John, but the fourfold combination of the mirrors projects His image like a living personality before your eyes. Here is the Christ, the historic Christ, in the narrative of the Gospels, and marvellous is the image thus projected. Have you ever noticed that men, when they give themselves to the delineation of biography, always deal in encomium, it is scarcely possible to avoid it. When men begin to depict and record character, they indicate their enthusiastic admiration of heroism; but when these evangelists sit down to the task of describing the living Word of God, there is not a single word of encomium; in their portrait of the living Word of God, I repeat, there is not a single word of encomium. They give the bald, naked facts without comment. There is no breaking out into enthusiasm over the matchless personality that they depict, but, themselves guided by a higher Hand, they give us the portrait without any admixture of human colouring.

But most of all, and most remarkable of all, when we look back into the Old Testament, we find this same Being, so marvellously depicted in the historic Gospels, is already pourtrayed in prediction. Now, I speak of this old argument because I am satisfied that we are not, brethren of the ministry, making half enough of the marvellous proof of Christ's

divinity, which is embraced in the prophetic Scriptures, and which really covers both the Person of Christ and the inspiration of the Word of God. Allow me very faintly and rapidly to sketch the outline of this argument. I will not speak at all of other prophetic predictions in the Old Testament. There are about six hundred and sixty-six distinct prophecies within the thirty nine books of the Old Testament; there are three hundred and thirty-three of them that centre about our Lord Jesus Christ. From remotest ages, from the time of the first promise in Genesis that the seed of the woman should bruise the head of the serpent, these promises, growing from that germ, expanding and ramifying like the branches of a tree, until they reach the tiniest and remotest twig of prophetic prediction, all centralize in one Person, our Lord Jesus Christ. And as history comes along and touches one of these prophetic predictions after another, and sets it aflame, the prophetic plant becomes a burning bush, and we take the shoes from off our feet, for the place we stand on is holy ground. This argument is impregnable and it has never been successfully assailed, simply because it cannot be successfully assailed. Men have attacked the Bible from almost every other point of view, but they have not dared to attack the Bible on the score of prophecy. The most that they could say as to that was what Voltaire and Porphyry and a few others have said, that these prophecies were so accurate and wonderful that they could not have been written until after the events had occurred. I cannot stop to speak at length of that "argument" or show its utter absurdity as to the Person of Jesus Christ. Malachi wrote about four centuries before Christ. There was then a cessation of the prophetic spirit, and we have no prophet between Malachi and Matthew. There could be no reaching across these four centuries, or any connection or collusion between the prophetic writers of the Old and historic narrators of the New Testaments, and God allowed this cessation in order that there might be no possibility of any doubter saying, in future ages, that the historic records of the New guided the prophetic writers of the Old in the delineation of the Person of Jesus Christ. Now, set it down in your minds and memories that here is this large gap, this wide gap of four centuries, and then remember that in the Old Testament, in three hundred and thirty-three distinct particulars, the Person of Jesus Christ, His character, career, even to the minutest details, is wonderfully and accurately set forth; and now tell me how can it be possible that these Old Testament writers should not be inspired, and how can it be possible that He, whom they graphically pourtrayed at least four centuries before he was born, should be other than the august personage which he claimed to be? I wonder how many, even of those in this audience, have really mastered this argument from prophecy. I remember, when I was myself a doubter, that the study of the prophetic Scriptures in a candid spirit effectually and finally removed the last vestige of my doubts, and I have never had any since with regard to the inspiration and infallibility of Scripture or the Divinity of Jesus Christ. When I wrote my little book, which some of you may possibly have seen, called "Many Infallible Proofs," it was simply an endeavour to delineate for others the path by which I had found my way out of that dark forest of sceptical opinion.

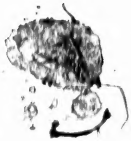
Now look, just for a moment—some of the younger friends here, at least, it may interest to follow me in a train of thought they have not hitherto taken. You know how difficult it is to produce an accurate and shrewd guess of future events the moment you enter into detail. We

may possibly give a good general conjecture when it is not required of us to be definite, but the moment we add particulars we get from the region of simple into that of compound probabilities. Now, Bible predictions start from a simple germinal foundation, the Seed of the woman bruising the serpent's head. Beginning there, they ramify, as I have said, branching in every direction more and more minutely. He is to come, for instance, of the seed of Seth, then of the seed of Abraham. Then of Abraham's two sons, of the seed of Isaac, of Isaac's two sons, of the seed of Jacob, of Jacob's twelve sons—there you have twelve branches, and one must be taken as the branch of the Messianic Line—he is to be of the line of Judah, and then, by-and-by, of the line of David. Now, each ramification multiplies many-fold the impossibility of chance fulfilment of these predictions, and yet not only is the line of the Messianic ancestry accurately depicted, but even the place of birth, Bethlehem—Judah, to distinguish from any other Bethlehem; even the time of birth. In the ninth chapter of Daniel it is to be seventy weeks, being in the Hebrew seventy heptades, or "periods of seven," "from the going forth of the commandment to restore and rebuild Jerusalem unto the coming of the Messiah." And when you remember that the going forth of that commandment was about 457 B.C., if you will add the thirty-three years of public ministry, you have exactly 490! Not only so, but even minor details, more elaborate details than these are indicated. As, for instance, the number of pieces of silver which were to be given in His betrayal, the person that was to betray him, and the manner of His betraying—even His dying cry on the cross, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" And if you will study carefully the twenty-second Psalm you will find—what is not revealed in the English translation, but which is clearly seen in the Hebrew—it is a psalm of sobs, broken up into fragmentary sentences—My God, My God . . . forsaken me? Far from helping me . . . words of my roaring! You find it all set down there,—a dying person, just about entering the unseen world, breath failing,—the physical energies exhausted, voice scarcely adequate to the pronunciation of a single word—it is gasp after gasp. That twenty-second psalm is a psalm full of gasps. It represents some sufferer pierced in hands and feet, naked, exposed to the view of the people, his muscles subject to the severest tension (as they were in crucifixion), his bones protruding as it were from the skin, in an agony of suffering tortured with awful thirst, surrounded by wild men insatiate for his blood!—it gives you all the various particulars in that vicarious agony. Not only so, but there are even paradoxes with regard to our Lord that never were explained until He came on earth to suffer and die. I cannot stop to speak of them, but you will find instances of them in the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah,—more than ten are remarkably given there. He was to be despised and rejected, yet a Saviour; He was to die, and yet He was to live; He was to be taken from prison and from judgment, as a condemned malefactor, and yet justify transgressors; He was to be without natural offspring, and yet was to see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied,[2] having a numerous seed. Before Christ came all these mysterious sayings were dark enigmas, never understood, but when He appeared, and His life and death unrolled before men, it was like Champollion, standing before the obelisks of Egypt and translating the inscriptions that had stood unread and undeciphered for thousands of years.

O my friends, this is a marvellous book. It vindicates its august claim to be the Word of God, the Revelation of the only way of salvation, and the biography of the marvellous Person, the Person of the ages, the Lord Jesus Christ,—and as I commit the first part, with the second part of my remarks, let me say that the vindication of this Bible is found on the very surface of it, by anyone who will look. You need not to go and read botany, geology, mineralogy or kindred sciences to find confirmation of this Word of God. Here is the document, and here is the seal and signature of God affixed to the document, it is the seal and signature of prophetic prediction historically fulfilled, and the little child, the man of little brains and common education can read in both its Testaments, can compare the prophecies of the Old with the historic portraits of the New, and can see that outline, that sketch that is begun in Genesis, to which delineation after delineation is added by the pencils of the prophets, taking on flesh-tints and colouring when the Evangelists add to the prophetic portrait what they had known and seen and handled of the Word of Life.

Now, I beg you to follow me for a few moments, and I trust I shall not trespass upon your patience unduly, if I say a few words with regard to the vindication of this august claim set up for the Word of God. In the first place, as I have indicated, it is tried by the test of *Time*.

Now time is itself a grand test of all institutions and of all literature. You remember that this Bible is the oldest book existing in our day, and that it is almost the only book that comes down to us from distant ages that is unmutilated. What means the disappearance of almost all ancient literature and the sole survival of this as the most ancient of all books? Remember also that there was every reason why the Bible should not have survived, for it encountered from the beginning the fiercest and desperate antagonism of the human race. The Bible is the only book on theology or morals that does not cater to mankind. It assaults man at every point,—it rebukes sin, it rebukes selfishness, it rebukes worldliness, it has no affiliations this side of Heaven. It resembles the snows that descend on the mountain tops; only as they melt an[d] pour their streams down the mountain side, the water never comes to us in absolute purity,—you can only find that on the mountain tops themselves, in the newly fallen snow. The Word of God belongs to the mountain tops, and all that on this human level bears the marks of man, and belongs to the earthly level. The Word of God is the only thing that comes down from the mountain tops without taking up the filth and the defilement of earth. But, as I was going to say, the wonderful thing about the Bible is, that, meeting as it does with the antagonism of man at every point, it has survived! This is the book toward which the rage of man has been pointed. This is the book that monarchs have associated all the force of their armies and all the power of their edicts to burn and bury and annihilate, and yet here it is, not a book lost, not a sentence irretrievably gone, it is all here. And not only so, but if you should take every copy of the Bible out of the earth to-night by some strange miracle, if it were possible to destroy every Old Testament, and every New Testament, and every fragmentary portion of the Word of God, every verse of this Bible could be collected from current literature. It is interwoven through the literature of the ages. When this question was raised, long, long ago, of taking the Bible out of human society, Dalrymple—you know he had a fancy for such researches—undertook to find out how much of the Bible could be found in the literature of the first four centuries, and after a few months' search he found every verse, except seven, and he said he believed



a little further search would disclose the seven. To-day one-half the literature of the civilized and enlightened nations revolves about the Word of God and two-thirds of it never could have existed in its present form, if it had not been for the Word of God. The apologetic literature that crystallizes about the Word of God is very large, but the literature that attacks the Word of God is still larger, and viewed from the broad foundation of common-sense and reason the assaults on the Bible are as great a vindication of its divine origin as the documents defending it. I tell you, my friends, that men do not worry themselves beating down a man of straw; it is the substantial value of the Word of God, it is its imperishable excellence, that makes it an object to assault it and undermine the confidence of people in it; but after all these centuries of strife, after all these milleniums of opposition, the Bible has more adherents to-day in the world than it ever had, and more devoted and earnest believers that would go to the stake for the sake of it, than it ever had in any past generation!

Again I beg you to notice that the Bible has been tried by the test of *Truth*. I think one of the most remarkable things about the Bible is this consistency with all truth; and I wish, Mr. Chairman, I was at the beginning of my speech now, and could have the whole evening before me. I would like to meet the scientists—so-called—with regard to their affirmations that the Bible is hopelessly in antagonism with modern science. The glory of this book is its truthfulness as to God and men and nature. Now, if there is one test which, being applied to the Word of God, might be supposed presumably to be a test that could not be successfully applied, it is the scientific. And here I want to say, without pretending to being a scientist, that after having studied the Word of God on the one hand for thirty years, and natural science on the other hand, I challenge any one man to bring a single established fact of modern science against which the Bible hopelessly militates. Now, let us remember that this Bible is the oldest book, hence it might reasonably be supposed that the errors which obtained in ancient days would certainly have found their way into it, as they found their way into every other book. What was known about all these sciences when Moses began to write? Supposing, according to one discovery of "higher criticism," the Bible did originate in later times, and not in the times ascribed to it, even then these sciences were not understood. How is it that not an error has crept into this Bible? Now, let me stop to define. I do not say there is no language adapted to popular apprehension which comes into the Bible, that there is no popular language that finds its way there; but we have the same thing in modern conversation. I sat down with a gentleman of high scientific attainments, who said that he went up the Alps to see the sun rise. The sun did not rise, the horizon went down; the sun never arose and never set, the earth simply revolved on its axis. Well now, if we use in common talk, what is incorrect scientifically, but is justified by popular usage, may not the Bible do the same thing? We speak of dew as being distilled in the far off depths of heaven, whereas we know that dew is nothing but atmosphere giving up vapour, depositing moisture at the touch of a cooler surface, as the ice-pitcher in the dining-room condenses and collects the drops from the air; the pitcher is making dew, that is all, it is not coming from very far off, either. These are simple instances of popular language, and find their way into the Bible as a matter of course; but they do not contradict science—they have nothing to do with science. The Bible is not a scientific book, its object is not to depict scientific truth, and therefore

we cannot expect to find it teaching science; nevertheless, God is the Author of it, as He is the Author of all truth, and therefore I willingly concede that it is inconceivable that God should fill the Bible with scientific lies, because its object is not the teaching of scientific truth. It claims to be the Word of God. There is but one way in which it can be true scientifically, and yet not anticipate scientific discovery, that we may form in our own mind. If there be terms which can be selected from human speech that are so elastic and flexible as that without disclosing scientific facts in advance, they may accommodate themselves to scientific facts when discovered, it would seem that that is the best thing that could be done by the writers of the Bible in the matter of expression touching science. It is the very thing that has been done. You open the first chapter of Genesis, and what do you find in the very first chapter? You find the word firmament. Now, the ancients believed that the concave above us was a solid concave of metal, and that the stars were fixed in that concave, and that it revolved in diurnal rotation around the earth. That word "firmament" finds its way into the Bible, because it was the closest word to express, in the minds of the translators, the Hebrew word "rakya," but the Hebrew word means simply "*expanse*;" had Moses been Ormsby, McKnight, Mitchell, or one of your grandest astronomers in the British Empire, like Rosse or Herschell, he could not have chosen a word that would more accurately express the exact fact, then unknown to men, that there is simply an *expanse* of space between the stars and the earth.

Well, I know it is said that Moses and geology are hopelessly at war! What does geology teach? As far as it teaches anything it teaches a wild watery waste, then the arising of the continents above the surface of the water, the appearance of the sun and moon in the heavens, after the moisture fog and mist had been dispersed on the third creative day; then the growth of enormous vegetation, in its three forms of plant, herb and tree; then the creation of animals, from lower types up to man. Just exactly *that order* does Moses follow in the six creative days, and his is the only ancient book that touches on cosmogony that does not teach nonsense. If I take the old East Indian books what is the system of cosmogony I find there? I will give it to you, as nearly as I can:

"Ages upon ages ago this earth began to be. It was made in seven stories of flat triangular plains resting upon the heads of elephants with their tails turned out! And the elephants were supported upon a great tortoise, and the tortoise rested upon the coil of a great snake, and the snake rested upon—nobody knows what!" That is Indian cosmogony. Compare it with Moses' sublime account of creation. Will you tell me who it was that so guided Moses that he should not use a single term anywhere in his account of the six days of the creation that should not be accordant with the discoveries of modern science? Comparative anatomy has shewn within the last two hundred years, that the order of creation was from a lower type to a higher. It began with the fish, the proportion of whose brain to the spinal cord (which is accepted as the standard) is two to one. Then came the reptiles, two and a-half to one; then the birds, three to one; then mammals, four to one, and then followed man with thirty-three to one as his ratio. Absolutely Moses' order! Who taught Moses comparative anatomy? Who can account for the mistakes that Moses—didn't make?

Well, I can only glance at this subject—if I am not already wearying you—but I have touched just rapidly on a few of the different sciences, that you may see the marvellous elasticity of the phraseology of the

Scriptures; how it anticipates science, like the acorn enfolding the germ of the mighty oak, yet to be grown and expanded in time. Here, for instance, is astronomy. Now, we read in Jeremiah that "the hosts of heaven cannot be numbered," even as "the sand upon the seashore cannot be measured." Well now, people might have said that was a poetic exaggeration, but it is a considerable exaggeration even for a poet, because, when Hipparchus made his estimate of the number of the stars, he counted and catalogued them, and it was done also after his day, it was found that there were about 3,130 in the entire concave of Heaven, that could be counted. Well, if Jeremiah understood the simple principles of arithmetic, he could surely count 3,130? He could hardly say they were quite as countless as the sands of the seashore? But when Galileo turned his telescope to Heaven, he found it to be no poetic imagination or exaggeration, for when that rude brazen tube was turned to the stars it began to be seen that they were countless,—but when Lord Rosse turned his great reflector to the stars four hundred millions became visible and countable, and when Herschel began, from the foot of the dark continent, to explore, he found the Milky Way, that stretches its white banner across the firmament, comprised simply millions upon millions of stars, that stand like countless warriors in serried ranks mustered so closely that only the light that flashes from their silver helmets reaches our eyes! Who taught Jeremiah astronomy? Who led him to use poetic phraseology, that exactly accommodates the facts of modern science, though those facts were not discovered until thousands of years after? Still take another example, here are the mysteries of optics. Now, I suppose, amongst the last discoveries of science are the facts with regard to light, Let me repeat, just for the sake of argument. You take a rod, and suspend it in the air, and start it vibrating, and it will give forth sounds, going from the lowest to the highest, but when they become so rapid that the vibration can no longer be represented in sound, the vibration passes to colour, through the whole order of the colours of the spectrum, and when it can no longer be represented by colour, it becomes—LIGHT! So that light is really music. Did you ever think of it? And the reason we do not hear the music in the light is because our senses are not attuned to those high vibrations. The lowest we can hear in the scale is 16½ vibrations to the second, and the highest we can hear is 38,000 to the second, and when it gets beyond 38,000 we cannot discover it as sound vibration, but it reveals itself to us in colour, and then in light. Now, do not you see that light is vibration, movement, motion, akin to music? Let us turn to the Holy Word, I could give you a dozen passages, let us take two—"The morning stars sang together." It took a good deal of intrepidity on the part of our translators, to translate the Hebrew word "ranan," which means to vibrate with a musical motion, "sang," but it absolutely expresses the fact, and to the ear of God the morning stars are singing. "Thou makest the out-going of the morning and evening to *rejoice*." It is the same Hebrew word, to give forth tremulous vibrations, like a musical instrument. "Thou makest the outgoing of the morning and evening to vibrate musically." Who taught the prophets and psalmist to use language which exactly accommodates itself to modern discoveries, made within the last thirty-five years, that light is like music, a form of vibrating motion? Compare also Psalm xix., where light and sound are strongly associated.

Take another instance of scientific accuracy. Solomon says in the twelfth chapter of Ecclesiastes: "Or ever the silver cord be loosed or the

golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern." I suppose we all understand that life is a kind of quadruped, it goes on four legs. There is the brain, the respiratory system, the heart, and the nervous system. What did Solomon know about physiology? And yet look at the marvellous description. The "silver cord" is the spinal marrow that passes down the back, from it the double system of sensor and motor nerves radiate in every direction; loosen that, you die. Pass your dissecting saw horizontally through the cranium, turn over the top of the skull, it is a "golden bowl" that holds the brain; shatter it, life departs. Open the chest, you find here the lungs, the "pitcher" close to the fountain of life, shaped like a pitcher, with a spout like a pitcher; it takes in the air, and it pours out the air; this is the "pitcher at the fountain." Now look closer, here is the heart, it draws up the blood through pipes of blue, it pulses forth the blood through pipes of crimson exactly as the "wheel" at the ancient cistern used to draw up the water through one set of pipes and propel it through another! Who taught Solomon to use language that exactly accommodates itself to Harvey's discovery of the circulation of the blood, hundreds and hundreds of years before the circulation of the blood was thought of?

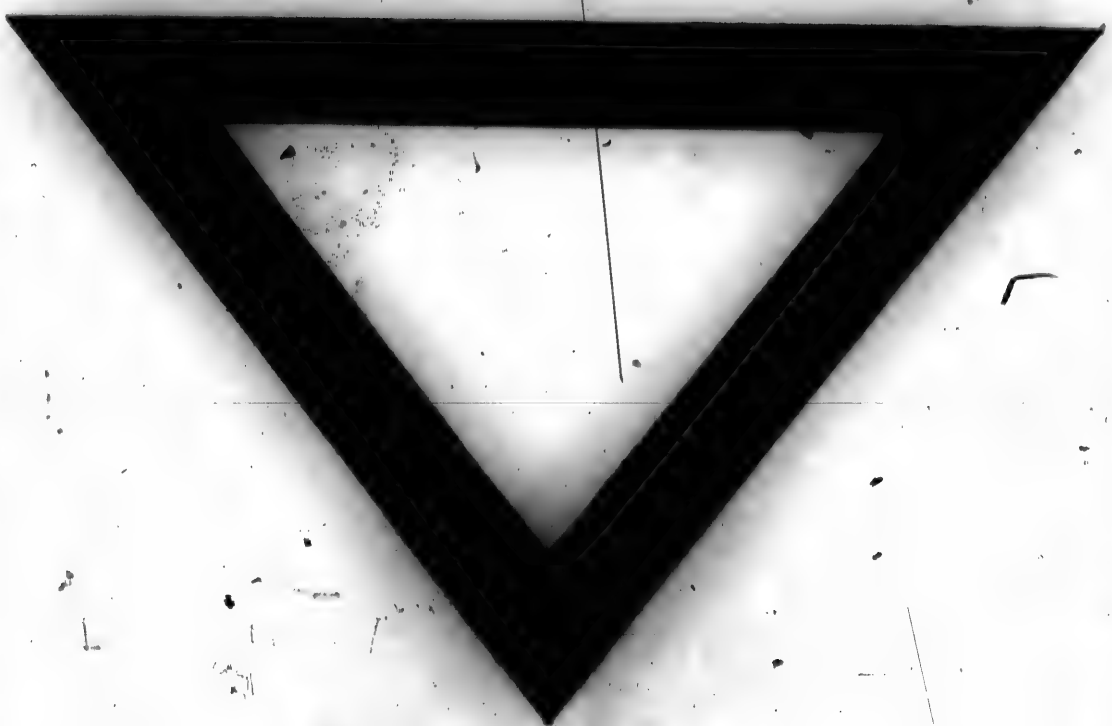
And so in every department of science you may go through this Word of God, and you will find no single well-established fact of science contradicted in this Holy Scripture anywhere. I know that infidels often try to make out that there is a good deal of antagonism between the Word of God and their "science." There is, and there ought to be! When they find anything that they think is a fact, and they think it bears against the Holy Scriptures, they ram it into their gun with a double charge of powder, and fire, and expect to see the defences of Christianity totter under the tremendous shock of their artillery! But lo, the walls stand, and there is not even a breach, not one stone fallen out, not even the mark of an impact. If you come to examine, you will find that instead of hurling some huge solid shot of hard fact against the walls of Christian defence, they have been simply firing a paper wad of their own fanciful theory, which took fire from their own powder before it got out of the mouth of the gun! Let science become settled and established, let us pass from the domain of hypothesis to unquestioned and accredited fact, and then bring these facts to compare with the Word of God, and there is no collision. Or, if there appear to be conflict, it is only like the failure of stereoscopic views to come together into one complete picture, when we look first into the eyepiece. We have only to wait until we get the common focal centre in which the visual rays may coincide, and the pictures will come into harmony. So all we have to do is just to wait and be patient until we get the eye on the proper focal centre, and all the facts and truths of science, and all the statements of the Word of God will harmonize absolutely and come into place.

Well, a word about the *ethical* truth of the Bible. I think it quite remarkable, dear friends, that the Bible should not only teach ethical truths so sublime and magnificent, but that it should actually contain within the compass of its ethical teachings not a single grain of error. Find me within this entire Word of God one solitary immoral teaching—one solitary thing that justifies sin! I know some people say David caused those people that he conquered to be sawn asunder, to be scraped and torn to pieces by harrows, to be split asunder by axes, and burnt up in lime-kilns! Yes—if you do not know any more about it than that, he did. But suppose that that word "made them to pass under" only means

what it meant in Roman days for people to pass under the yoke, why then he simply set them to work at lime-kilns, drawing harrows, cutting down trees and using saws; quite different, is it not? But it is astonishing to see how eager some people are to get a shot against the Bible. They do not stop to see if there is anything in their hand, but if it only appears to be something that can be hurled against the Word of God, away it goes! It reminds me of the strictures of one of the Boston papers, stating that the whole story of the quails in the wilderness was absolutely absurd, because Moses represented them as falling on the earth several cubits high; and an estimate was made by the editor as to how many each Hebrew would have for his breakfast, dinner and supper, and how many he would have over to give to the heathen neighbours around about! If I should tell you that coming here to this church to-night I saw a flock of quails three cubits high, you would not think I saw them *piled* three cubits high, but *flying* three cubits high, so that I could take a stick and knock them down easily. That is exactly what Moses meant, that they came within reaching distance so that they could be easily knocked down. He did not consider, I dare say, that the newspapers were ever going to be published, or gather such absurdity from the language he used. As I have said, the ethical truth of the Bible is marvellous,—no condoning of offences, no commending of iniquities,—the purest moral code ever found in the world, absolutely free from all adulteration. And then, when you come to its splendid conceptions, look at the spiritual truth,—think of God, Eternal, Omniscient, Omnipresent, Infinite, All-wise, just, good, merciful, true, a Spirit, and a Spiritual God. And then think of the fact that there are no half-truths in this Bible,—I think that is also most marvellous. I will give you one illustration if you will bear with me. Take the fifteenth chapter of Luke, it is a most instructive chapter, it contains three illustrations, three revelations as to the "lost, found." It is a common thing for ministers of the Gospel and commentators to say that it contains *three* parables; it contains only one. He "spake *this parable* unto them;" it is in three forms of representation; he does not pass to the second and third and say "another parable," because it is one parable illustrating one great subject, and there are three divisions or representations. We recognize the trend of the parable, it is how the lost is found. I simply want to call attention to the fact that no half-truths are presented in this chapter. The first part of this parable is the shepherd seeking the lost sheep and carrying it back on the shoulder; it is not even led or driven home, but is borne home on the shoulder, the place of strength. In the second part, the woman loses a piece of silver from her necklace, and sweeps the whole house until she finds it, but even when found it must be lifted up, and placed there on the necklace among its fellows. Well, after you have got these two representations you might suppose that, in the matter of salvation, God does all and man has nothing to do; he is simply the sheep lost by wandering to be found and brought back, or like the senseless coin on which the image and superscription of God was once placed, which, by contact with the world and currency in a worldly society has had that image and superscription defaced, if not effaced; and which must be picked up by the Spirit of God, who with His lit candle searches for the lost soul among the rubbish of this world, and who reclaims it and puts it on the necklace of the Bride of Christ. Christ does not leave us with these half-truths. Men leave us with half-truths, and perplex us by omissions, but here Christ goes on, and he gives us the third representation that completes the three-fold parable: A certain man had two sons.

You notice the son did all the straying, and he does all the returning. He comes to himself, he repents, he resolves, he confesses, he takes the attitude of reconciliation, and he is met by the Father, but there is nothing done by the Father *except to* run and meet him when he has come home. So you have the grand truths of salvation presented, first from one hemisphere—God's side, and then from the other hemisphere—man's side. Well, I have always felt myself to be, as near as you might express it, a Calvinist, but I do not think that Calvin possessed a monopoly of truth; I do not think he was as infallible as the Bible is. Now, I think that Calvin offset the mischievous emphasis that had been placed upon the agency of man in salvation by taking his position on God, and he made the will of God the centre of his system, and taking his position on God the necessary effect was that man dwindled into insignificance. Let me illustrate. Suppose you are studying the solar system, and can take your flight through space. You take your stand upon the earth; why, the earth fills the horizon, and the sun is merely the largest luminary in the Heavens, it is far off and small, and the earth close at hand is a great body. Now, will you take your place on the sun? The sun fills the horizon, and you do not even see the earth! The way to study the solar system is to get *midway between* the earth and the sun, and then you will get an idea of the proportions of the two. Arminius took his stand on man, man filled the horizon, and God appeared comparatively small. Calvin took his stand on God, and God so completely filled the horizon that man dwindled into insignificance, if he did not disappear altogether! Now the difference between Divine and human teaching is this, that man takes one position from which to view truth, and so sees it only partially,—when God teaches truth He gives us both sides of the sphere, He puts half-truth to half-truth, and so when Christ taught about the soul He first took His stand on God, and man seemed to be nothing but simply a lost soul recovered by infinite mercy, brought back by infinite grace, into the fold, fastened again to the necklace of the Bride of Christ,—as stupid as a sheep that knows not when it wanders, as senseless as a coin that does not even know that it is lost or ever bore an image and superscription of an imperial character. But when Christ has shewn us that half-truth, He wheels around and shews us the other half-truth,—if from the one side of salvation God does everything, from the other side, man does everything, and it is only when you put the two together that you have the rounded sphere of truth, that links salvation both with the activity of God and the responsive activity of man. God elects a man to be a saved man, and man elects God to be his God and Saviour, and so the wonderful test of truth in the Bible is the ethical completeness of it, and the spiritual sublimity of it.

Now, there is only one other test that I have time to apply. I have spoken of the survival of the Bible as the fittest, and the only fit, to survive. I have spoken of the test of truth. I want to say one word, in conclusion, about the test of practical *life*. Now, as to this crucial test of the Word of God and of every other system, let me simply call your attention to one verse that was read by our brother in the opening of the service: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." Here the five objects of the Word of God are indicated; without amplifying upon them at all, let me refer to these five objects set down here, as reached by the Word of God.

First—Instruction—revealing truth that we never could have found out in any other possible way. Second—Reproof—that is where the Word of God deals with the conscience, that is, where it sends its dart into the moral sense, and arouses the whole man to see he is a sinner against God and man; and then thirdly—the Word of God is for correction. The word means literally, setting upright. Man is fallen, the Word of God sets him upright and turns his feet into the way, restores him when erring. And the fourth object is—Teaching "instruction in righteousness,"—training the disciple for every good work. He has had truth revealed by the Bible that he could not otherwise have discovered; his conscience aroused, he has been set upright, corrected, restored; now he is to be taught in righteousness. It is the kind of teaching referred to by Christ when He said, "Go, disciple all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, *teaching* them to observe, etc."; there is the instruction that comes after the setting upright, it is the training in righteousness, it is training the man to be a veteran soldier in Christ. And fifthly and finally, it is the furnishing him in all good works for service in the Kingdom of God. That is the practical test of the Bible; wherever it has gone it has taught men what they did not know and could not have found out for themselves, it has pricked the conscience and reproved man of sin, it has aroused the will to holy resolve and set the man right before God, once more made an upright man of him, it has turned him out a skilled soldier and warrior, and it has furnished him as a workman for all good service.

My dear friends, here is God's House-Beautiful. It is a Palace. You may enter by simple faith, and you may ascend to its topmost storey by simple obedience. It is a grandly-furnished Palace. It has in it a refectory, with milk for babes, with bread and strong meat for those that can assimilate such food, and with honey sweet and delicious to the taste, and the Water of Life. He brings us to the banqueting-house, and His banner over us is Love. In this House-Beautiful is a lavatory, where is at once a laver and a mirror. You come up to it, and in the clear, still surface you discover, as in a mirror, your deformity and defilement, and in the same water in the laver, which, as a mirror, discloses your defilement, you may wash your defilement away. In that same apartment there is a fountain of blood that is more efficient even than the laver of the Word, for while the laver of the Word sanctifies, it cannot justify. You may come to the fountain of Blood to be justified, and then, by the Blood and the Word and the Spirit, together, you shall be sanctified and perfected in holiness. In that same Palace-Beautiful there is a dormitory where the tired and worn and weary pilgrim lies down as in a chamber of peace and looks out through the window toward the sunrise and beholds the delectable mountains, and refreshes himself for the toils and strifes and conflicts of the coming day. In that same blessed Palace-Beautiful is God's gallery, where He has arranged before us portraits of prophets and saints, and martyrs and apostles, and, above, the immaculate portrait of the Son of God. In that same Palace-Beautiful there is a conservatory where the very plants and flowers and fruits of the Celestial City may both be perceived and partaken of; and if by obedience you ascend the spiral staircase, you shall come last of all to the observatory, whose windows look out on celestial scenes themselves, and through the cloudless atmosphere you shall get a glimpse of the face of God.